

IDEAS ON POLICY TOWARD LATIN AMERICA FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

BY

COLONEL BRIAN J. BUTCHER
United States Army

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for Public Release.
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2009

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.



U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 24-03-2009		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Paper		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Ideas on Policy Toward Latin America for the New Administration				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Brian J. Butcher				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) COL Alex Crowther Strategic Studies Institute				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT DISTRIBUTION A: UNLIMITED					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The new administration that assumes power on 20 January 2009 will face sub-optimal relations with a region that is paradoxically quite important to the United States, yet often neglected. Years of focusing policy on the Middle East and some U.S. decisions and diplomacy have complicated the already problematic U.S. relations with many of our Latin American neighbors. This SRP will briefly examine the history of U.S.-Latin American relations, describe somewhat more comprehensively the events of the past eight years and the resulting current situation. Next it will offer an optimal solution, albeit costly and unlikely. Finally, it will offer some suggestions on how the incoming administration can improve our government's relationships with Latin American nations using existing programs. These suggestions call for integrating all elements of national power – diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) – to strengthen our nation's ties with our Latin American neighbors.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS National Sovereignty, North American Air Defense, Homeland Defense, Terrorism, NAFTA, National Security					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)
			UNLIMITED	26	

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

IDEAS ON POLICY TOWARD LATIN AMERICA FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

by

Colonel Brian J. Butcher
United States Army

Colonel Glenn A. Crowther
United States Army
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Brian J. Butcher
TITLE: Ideas on Policy toward Latin America for the New Administration
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 24 March 2009 WORD COUNT: 5373 PAGES: 26
KEY TERMS: Latin America, U.S. Foreign Policy
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The new administration that assumes power on 20 January 2009 will face sub-optimal relations with a region that is paradoxically quite important to the United States, yet often neglected. Years of focusing policy on the Middle East and some U.S. decisions and diplomacy have complicated the already problematic U.S. relations with many of our Latin American neighbors. This SRP will briefly examine the history of U.S.-Latin American relations, describe somewhat more comprehensively the events of the past eight years and the resulting current situation. Next it will offer an optimal solution, albeit costly and unlikely. Finally, it will offer some suggestions on how the incoming administration can improve our government's relationships with Latin American nations using existing programs. These suggestions call for integrating all elements of national power – diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) – to strengthen our nation's ties with our Latin American neighbors.

IDEAS ON POLICY TOWARD LATIN AMERICA FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

Latin American expert Peter Hakim observed two years ago that "Relations between the United States and Latin America today are at their lowest point since the end of the Cold War."¹ Since then, not much has improved. According to Hakim, the United States lost interest in Latin America after 9/11. Then Latin American support for Washington's policies and initiatives has declined correspondingly.²

We might ask why this is important. Why is this a problem, given the numerous other pressing foreign policy challenges faced by the U.S. today? U.S. Relations with Latin America are important for a number of reasons. The United States and Latin America are busy trading partners. Latin America and Canada supply one-half of the U.S. energy supply, and U.S. exports to Latin America surpass \$225 billion, four times current U.S. exports to China.³ Latin America accounts for seventeen percent of U.S. global trade, this volume could surpass trade with Europe and Japan in 2011.⁴ We have enormous cultural connections with Latin America; over fifteen percent of U.S. citizens claim Latino heritage, and this number could rise to one-quarter of our population by 2050.⁵ Additionally, Latin American immigrants to the U.S. sent home over \$45 billion in remittances in 2006.⁶ We share numerous societal and democratic values, as well as a long and close, if sometimes turbulent, history of political, social, and economic relationships. Finally, if Latin American countries are unable to adequately provide security and prosperity for their people and secure their territories, the National Intelligence Council warns, "these areas will become more fertile grounds for terrorism, organized crime, and pandemic disease."⁷

The United States has long desired a secure, stable, and prosperous Latin America. The current National Security Strategy (NSS) echoes previous strategies by declaring, "Our goal remains a hemisphere fully democratic, bound together by good will, security cooperation, and the opportunity for all citizens to prosper."⁸ The NSS also lists four strategic priorities for the Western Hemisphere:

- bolstering security,
- strengthening democratic institutions,
- promoting prosperity, and
- investing in people.⁹

The Bush Administration's vision and strategic priorities described above reflect long-term U.S. grand strategy. It is unlikely these lofty goals will change with the new administration.

Given our current poor state of relations with Latin America and our established vision and goals for the region, what policy should the new Obama Administration adopt for Latin America? This SRP offers some suggestions on how to improve relations with Latin America in a renewed attempt to meet U.S. grand strategy goals. First, it examines the state of current U.S.-Latin American relations more closely in order to better understand the scope of the problem. Then it proposes an optimal and comprehensive, albeit expensive solution. Finally, it offers suggestions on how to use the primary elements of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic; or DIME) to better achieve our grand strategy goals.

The Current State of U.S.-Latin American Relations

Relations between the United States and Latin America have a long and checkered history. Soon after the newly independent Latin American republics formed themselves largely in the image of their northern neighbor, the Monroe Doctrine effectively established the area as a strong U.S. interest. For many years, close business relationships provided the pretext for U.S. interference and intervention in the affairs of the region. Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy attempted to improve relations and work toward the U.S. grand strategic goals described above with their Good Neighbor policy and Alliance for Progress programs. As Peter Hakim points out, Latin Americans positively remember some events in recent history, such as the Brady debt-relief plan (1989), President George H.W. Bush's free trade initiative (1990), the North American Free Trade Area initiative (1993) and the U.S. rescue of the Mexican peso (1995).¹⁰ Yet, Latin Americans appear to feel generally neglected by a lack of U.S. interest since 2001. Hakim believes that "Perhaps what most troubles Latin Americans is the sense that Washington does not take the region seriously and still considers it to be its own backyard."¹¹

In the past seven years, Latin American approval of U.S. actions has steadily declined. According to the respected Latinobarómetro poll, overall approval (view of the U.S. as "good" or "very good") fell from 73% in 2001 to 58% in 2008 (the lowest level since polling began in 2000).¹² A principal cause of this decline appears to be the U.S. efforts in the Global War on Terror – particularly the invasion of Iraq, detainee operations at Guantánamo, and the Abu Ghraib scandal. One illustration of Latin American disapproval is the fact that only seven of 34 Latin American nations supported

the Iraq War, and both Chile and Mexico (often U.S. supporters) opposed the invasion in the United Nations Security Council.¹³ Hakim goes on to say that most in the region were "dumbfounded by U.S. actions at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay."¹⁴

Uneven economic performance and rising crime and instability have caused many Latin Americans to reconsider their adherence to the Washington Consensus¹⁵ neoliberal economic model and even the utility of democracy itself as a form of governance. The Latinobarómetro poll found that only 38% of Latin Americans see the economic future of their country as "much better" or "a little better."¹⁶ Fifty three percent of Latin Americans either "agree" or "strongly agree" that they would not mind an authoritarian government taking power if it could resolve their economic problems.¹⁷ Noted Latin American scholar Gabriel Marcella summarized the situation aptly: "A growing backlash against democracy and neo-liberalism has been underway for more than a decade, with some leaders resorting to authoritarian methods to steer the ship through the tempest."¹⁸

Marcella details what he calls a Latin American "culture of resentment" in his monograph. He claims that Latin American governments' inability to deliver basic services and security accentuates the dissatisfaction cited above, exacerbating lackluster economic gains and discontent with democracy. Latin Americans are increasingly dissatisfied with progress in literacy, access to health care, availability of clean water, access to education, and rising crime and violence. This discontent leads them to favor shortcuts from democratic norms and accept authoritarian populism for solutions.¹⁹ Marcella suggests that this is not fully the fault of the system. This troubling

situation is also negatively affected by some Latin American cultural traits, such as a greater tolerance of corruption and less adherence to the rule of law.²⁰

Venezuela offers perhaps the most noteworthy manifestation of the phenomena of the culture of resentment, especially of anti-Americanism. Peter Hakim describes how Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez has steadily augmented his domestic power by co-opting disaffected Venezuelans, to the point where he rules almost unchecked in Venezuela. Chávez is also leading an unprecedented effort to establish a wide-ranging anti-U.S. coalition that seeks to replace Washington's agenda with Chávez's own, which attacks participative democracy and free market economics.²¹ He is attempting to spread this movement, with its inherent threats to democracy and stability, to other nations, and indeed is enjoying some success.

Jorge Castañeda, Mexico's former foreign secretary, suggests that the authoritarian leftist governments, which have tapped into Latin American dissatisfaction, have caused a polarization between them and other, more pragmatic or responsible leftist governments. Castañeda views Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, some nations in Central America, and perhaps Peru as belonging in the modern, pragmatic leftist category. Meanwhile, he suggests the political left in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Cuba, Nicaragua, Mexico, El Salvador, and to a lesser degree Colombia, Paraguay, and Argentina belong in the anti-U.S., populist, statist, authoritarian category. Castañeda admits not all of the leftist groups in these countries are in power, but allows that they have the possibility of gaining it.²² Thus, it appears that there is a conflict of ideologies in the hemisphere between a group of populist, anti-U.S., authoritarian regimes which are

capitalizing on the resentment of Latin Americans and a group of more pragmatic modern governments.

In view of this analysis, the United States faces a Herculean task to repair the current state of relations with our southern neighbors and eventually to attain our long-standing grand strategy goals of security, democracy, stability, and prosperity in the hemisphere. Yet in all of this adversity, there is considerable opportunity as well. Castañeda asserts that the incoming administration must understand that Latin America is passing through a period which combines both the best and worst aspects of its history – rapid economic growth, and growing democracy, but also growing political polarization.²³ This could provide opportunity for the United States, should we decide to engage decisively and consistently. Hakim states "most Latin American governments continue to seek closer ties with the United States . . . even though many of them no longer consider the United States to be a fully reliable partner or want to be Washington's ally."²⁴

To sum up, it appears that U.S.-Latin American relations are in a relatively bad state today, but certainly reparable. The U.S. grand strategic goals (security, stability, and prosperity for the hemisphere) appear to be closely aligned with the desires of the people of the hemisphere. Citizens of many Latin American countries are not satisfied with their governments' efforts to provide security, stability, and prosperity. It follows that cooperation between the United States and the countries of Latin America meet these goals would be mutually beneficial.

One Solution -- A New Alliance for Progress

One of the more useful United States efforts at promoting security, stability, and prosperity in the hemisphere was the Alliance for Progress. It enjoyed relative success during the 1960s. President John F. Kennedy announced the Alliance in a speech in March 1961. His administration vigorously pursued the objectives of the Alliance, as did the Johnson Administration until the Vietnam War diverted attention late in Johnson's term. During its period of success, it benefitted from on the order of fifteen to sixteen billion dollars (the equivalent of \$100 billion today) of U.S. external assistance, including aid from U.S. agencies and multilateral bodies such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. It was not a one-way street, however; there was a great deal of debate and consensus involved in the establishment of the Alliance and the execution of its programs. The Organization of American States (OAS) had a large role in its administration, and the program's overall steering committee, composed of U.S. and Latin American leaders, operated under the rubric of the OAS.²⁵ The key, according to a group that has studied the Alliance for Progress, was a "willingness on the part of the United States to communicate with Latin America, to listen and not to preach, to accept change as a goal instead of a danger and, as good neighbors, to assist them in their domestic reform efforts."²⁶

Given the scope of U.S. interests in Latin America, the needs these interests entail, and the current state of relations, an Alliance for Progress-style program would seem to be an optimal solution as a new U.S. presidential administration takes office. It could be called the "Partnership for Prosperity." The most critical element in the success of a significant program such as this is sustained senior policymakers' interest and

commitment. As mentioned earlier, President Kennedy provided the impetus for the Alliance for Progress early in his term. Then senior officials in both his administration and the Johnson administration that followed managed to keep the program chugging along. As with the Alliance for Progress, a dramatic rollout followed by a presidential trip to the region would be the best way to launch the new program. The President would need to follow up with on-going and intensive senior-level support.

Before rollout, policy makers should establish a framework for the program, and this should be done by consensus. The major players in the design of the program should be the U.S. and responsible Latin American nations who choose to be involved. The more modern, pragmatic governments mentioned by Castañeda ²⁷ and the OAS contribute to an appropriate start. Other stakeholders would include Congress, academia, international multilateral organizations, multinational corporations, and non-governmental organizations. The European Union, Japan, and other major donor nations may wish to participate as well – they should be invited. The point is that this is should not be a U.S.-only endeavor. Latin Americans should have a great deal of input into the design of the program and its initiatives. Theodore Mesmer, Irwin Baskind, and Enrique Lerdaú, in their article reflecting on the Alliance for Progress, assert that the inclusion of the OAS and Latin American ideas and oversight was essential to the success of the Alliance for Progress.²⁸

A Partnership for Prosperity would of necessity generate a comprehensive set of initiatives designed to address the various causes of Latin America's culture of resentment. Initiatives should include projects designed to fight corruption, broaden trade, improve health care, provide greater access to education, expand internet use,

professionalize the military, enable nations to better secure their borders and ungoverned spaces, and reform financial sectors and markets. Launching initiatives on all or some of these issues would require the full cooperation and involvement of the proposed stakeholders.

Such a program would probably require a great deal of resources. As such, it would require both a strong external strategic communications plan to inform Latin Americans of its purpose and goals and an internal strategic communications strategy designed to inform U.S. taxpayers. It is imperative that these strategies highlight the linkage between the security, stability, and prosperity of the region and security and prosperity for the United States. The U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) Command Strategy is a good starting point for both of these efforts; it succinctly explains the mutual benefits of security and stability for all in the hemisphere.²⁹

So such a comprehensive program would be an excellent way to approach the complicated problems of Latin America, help achieve U.S. grand strategic goals, and improve the currently strained relations between the U.S. and the region. Unfortunately, there is very little chance such an ambitious program will be feasible, given the likely priorities of the incoming administration. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ongoing financial crisis, and other pressing domestic problems practically guarantee the Obama administration will find itself decisively engaged on these issues, with little extra organizational energy or funding to spare for designing and implementing a significant new program. Additionally, the likely high cost of such a program would be prohibitive in the current budgetary environment.

Another Solution -- Enhance Efforts Within the DIME Elements

There is another solution, however. The new administration can still make a great deal of progress in restoring relations and achieving U.S. grand strategy goals using existing programs. Again, the key is senior-level policymaker commitment. Consider the following proposed contributions of the four primary elements of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic, or DIME) to better U.S.-Latin American relations.

Diplomatic Means. The United States has considerable diplomatic power at its disposal, and it could probably be a great deal more effective. The critical factor in exercising diplomatic power in the hemisphere will be backing it up with sustained senior-level interest and commitment. Senior policy makers across the governmental spectrum need to concentrate their attention on Latin American issues. They should open and maintain a constructive dialogue with their counterparts in Latin America; they should expend the necessary energy to genuinely connect with them and understand their point of view. As discussed earlier, Latin Americans are interested in dialogue with the United States, despite the current state of relations. As Dr. Marcella observed, “Good things happen when the United States focuses its attention for the long term on the region.” Again, the key to success will be senior-level commitment for the long term.

Along with this senior-level focus, Latin Americans need to perceive our diplomacy as diplomatic and civilian in nature, as opposed to perceptions of a “militarized” foreign policy that critics have decried for some time. After studying SOUTHCOM’s activities and reading SOUTHCOM’s Command Strategy 2016 (the precursor to the current strategy cited in this paper), one critic, Juan Gabriel Tokatlian,

described SOUTHCOM's mission as "excessive" in response to the strategy's discussion of economic, social, and political goals.³⁰ A detailed report by the Washington Office on Latin America suggests that "For at least half of the last decade, the U.S. military relationship with Latin America has been flying below the radar." The report is extremely skeptical regarding U.S. military aid to Latin America and closely examines this aid in the context of other programs.³¹ An increase in senior policy maker interest, their speeches, and trips to the region would quickly reduce the perception of a military-led policy effort.

Another diplomatic task should be to encourage the review and, if necessary, the restructuring of existing multilateral hemispheric organizations. The U.S. and Latin American countries need to review the structure, roles, and missions of the OAS, the Inter-American Development Bank, and Inter-American Defense Board with a view to bringing them up-to-date and making them more effective. This issue continually arises at regional conferences and in the press. The factor that is missing is, again, sustained senior U.S. policymakers' attention and commitment.

We should redouble diplomatic efforts to seek Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA), Defense Cooperation Agreements (DCA), Bilateral Investment Treaties, and other trade and cultural agreements with the other countries in the hemisphere. We should reconsider our hard line on SOFAs that has made them a difficult sell in many countries. We often adopt an all-or-nothing approach, especially with regard to jurisdictional issues for crimes committed by U.S. service members in partner nations. If we manage to soften our position on this issue alone, the U.S. could enter into more SOFAs and gain more U.S. military access into those countries. We should also work

toward increasing the number of DCAs we have in place in the region. DCAs enable us to expand and intensify our military-to-military relationships because they often broaden the range of potential engagement opportunities. Agreements are important. A truism of diplomacy is that, no matter what the substance of the agreement might be, the fact the two parties are talking and exchanging ideas is a positive step.

As we work toward achieving these diplomatic goals, we should initially concentrate our efforts on the more modern and pragmatic governments mentioned in the first section of this paper. We should intensify our diplomatic efforts in Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Central America in order to achieve early successes and establish momentum that would lead to more favorable consideration from other Latin American countries.

Informational Efforts. We are losing the strategic communications battle for two reasons. First, our public diplomacy and public affairs organizations are reactive, rather than proactive. We are consistently playing catch-up. Consider the recent reactivation of the U.S. Navy's Fourth Fleet, destined to be the naval headquarters for SOUTHCOM. The 24 April 2008 press release announcing this reactivation led to confusion and unhelpful speculation regarding the reasons for it, largely due to an uncoordinated public affairs rollout. The Voice of America recently reported widespread unease within the region because of the reactivation, and Venezuela has supposedly purchased Russian bombers to defend against the fleet and recently warned that Fourth Fleet vessels should stay out of its waters.³² All of government, and particularly the State Department's public diplomacy bureau, must work together to better coordinate the message and function continuously with agility and flexibility.

The second reason we are losing the battle is the message itself. The NSS waxes eloquent about the region being "the frontline of defense of American national security." Then it warns if America's neighbors are not "secure and stable," Americans will be less secure. It concludes that security is the top priority for America's partnership with our southern neighbors.³³ Admittedly, this is our national security strategy. But the inherent negatives associated with such an emphasis on security ensure that this message does not sell well south of the border. Certainly Latin Americans want security, but they do not want the U.S., with its history of intervention in the region, to tell them how to secure their nations. As Marcella points out, while the United States tends to define security in military terms, Latin American nations emphasize economic development as the basis of security.³⁴ We should better frame our message to resonate with the intended target audience. Instead of the current goals of "security, democratic institutions, prosperity, and people," we should perhaps use something such as "shared prosperity, democratic institutions, people, and stability." SOUTHCOM's Command Strategy 2018 does a much better job of succinctly explaining how the command intends to support the improvement of security and stability in the hemisphere. A similar effort is necessary at the grand strategic level to communicate that the United States' vision for cooperation with Latin America that is not excessively focused on security – especially U.S. security.³⁵

We must increase the number of exchanges and cultural events that the U.S. Government sponsors for Latin Americans. Programs such as the Fulbright Scholarship, International Visitor Program, and others can be instrumental in acquainting Latin Americans with the United States, our values and ideals, and the benefits of

collaborating with us. Fulbright scholars from over 155 countries have studied in the U.S. for over sixty years. The program is funded at around \$200 million annually by both the United States taxpayer and by bi-national commissions or foundations abroad.³⁶ When these scholars return to their home countries, they become academic leaders, political figures, business leaders, and opinion makers. They serve as arbiters and supporters in our dealings in the region. U.S. investment in the mutual understanding enabled by these Fulbright grants more than pays off in the end. The International Visitor Program is similar; it targets mid- to senior-level professionals in the sectors mentioned above. International Visitors spend a few weeks in the United States becoming acquainted with their sector of interest. They are similarly able to advance mutual understanding upon their return to their home countries.

Military Means. The United States already has a very robust military engagement with the region, thanks to the fact that the Department of Defense (DoD) has an organization dedicated to the region – United States Southern Command. A centerpiece of the U.S. military effort in Latin America is engagement through training and education exchanges and joint exercises. U.S. security cooperation offices assigned to SOUTHCOM help administer the programs that send Latin American military students to U.S. military schools. As with the Fulbright and International Visitor programs, sending military members to U.S. schools and training is an excellent means to build interoperability, acquaint them with U.S. values, and professionalize Latin American militaries. We must increase the number of U.S. school slots for Latin American service members and correspondingly raise International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding. During the years 2003-2007 we hosted fewer Latin American service

members in U.S. schools and training because many nations in Latin America lost their IMET funding due to certain provisions of 2002 Congressional legislation.

This requires some explanation. The U.S. and most of the rest of the world negotiated and signed the Treaty of Rome in the latter years of the last century. This Treaty creates the International Criminal Court, which its signatories authorize to try cases related to human rights and genocide crimes. The United States never ratified the Treaty, claiming some of the provisions are vague and could prejudice U.S. military operations abroad. In an effort to mitigate the potential effects of the Treaty on military operations, the U.S. began negotiating reciprocal hold-harmless agreements with signatories of the Treaty of Rome. These "Article 98" agreements were named for the article of the Treaty which sanctions bilateral hold-harmless agreements. In 2002 Congress passed the American Service-Members' Protection Act, which prohibited granting IMET funding to signatories of the Treaty of Rome who had not signed an Article 98 Agreement with the United States. This measure denied IMET funding to a majority of Latin American nations until a presidential waiver in late 2006 renewed the program in those countries. It is time to catch up with the half generation of officers we missed during that period and enroll them in U.S. military training and schools.

Combined training exercises are another engagement tool that develops interoperability, expands military-to-military relationships, and professionalizes partner nation militaries. SOUTHCOM conducts numerous exercises that focus on disaster relief, peacekeeping, transnational threats, protection of the Panama Canal, and individual skills competitions.³⁷ SOUTHCOM has steadily increased the number and

frequency of these exercises over the last few years. There is room to expand them even further.

We must improve mechanisms for information exchange and be prepared to share more information and intelligence with our Latin American military partners. This is a priority for SOUTHCOM, prominently featured in its *Command Strategy 2018*.³⁸ The United States has been slow to develop more streamlined procedures to facilitate intelligence sharing. Often, by the time we are able to gain release authority for intelligence, the usefulness of the intelligence has waned. As we continually face more common security threats in the hemisphere, we must arrange to quickly and effectively exchange information with our partners. This would go a long way toward developing even closer military-to-military relationships. It would also increase trust and thereby enable the receipt of more information from our partners.

The United States should also expand its law enforcement cooperation with Latin American countries. This is especially important given the number of transnational threats posed by organized crime that we share with our southern neighbors. Law enforcement organizations generally have excellent relationships with their counterparts in Latin America, and the same rationale that applies to military training and exercises applies here: training and working together build interoperability and professionalize organizations. More importantly, closer relationships in law enforcement actually help close cases and make the hemisphere more secure. The U.S. government should also develop a national capability to train international police forces similar to the way that the DoD trains international militaries.

Economic Initiatives. One of the surest ways to promote prosperity and economic development is to increase trade. The United States has long advocated more open trade, both within and without the hemisphere. These efforts have been moderately successful. A free trade agreement with Chile was implemented on 1 January 2004.³⁹ A free trade agreement with Peru is pending implementation, and free trade agreements with Colombia and Panama are pending approval in the U.S. Congress.⁴⁰ We currently have bilateral investment treaties with Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.⁴¹ These treaties remove barriers to investment between the parties and usually increase the flow of investment and business between them. Encouragement of further free trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties would help increase trade and investment between the United States and Latin America. the new administration should make promotion of hemispheric trade and investment a priority.

The United States should also review its economic aid programs in the region. There are numerous opportunities throughout Latin America for economic development programs, health care initiatives, and educational programs – all of which contribute to economic development and prosperity. We are doing a great deal in some countries, but less in others. We should take stock of where we may be able to better use our resources. For example, it might be useful to consider the success of some microcredit programs in developing areas such as India for replication in Latin America. As Center for Hemispheric Affairs Research Associate Michael Glenwick reports, the practice is already in use in the region, but might need some refinement. Glenwick reports that

microcredit is effective, but cannot be relied upon to lift significant numbers of people out of poverty alone -- governments must also participate.⁴²

Finally, we should consider expanding the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) to provide assistance to more Latin American countries. As Peter Hakim observes, the MCA provides aid to very poor but well-governed countries, which excludes a number of potential Latin American recipients due to their income levels.⁴³ Raising the minimum per capita income level for MCA assistance could add several Latin American countries to the list of those eligible for the program. Countries whose per capita incomes are greater than \$3705 do not qualify, so this criterion would disqualify Suriname, Mexico, Jamaica, Argentina, Uruguay, and other Latin American countries. So far, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua have signed agreements under the MCA for assistance. Bolivia, Colombia, and Paraguay are in the process of exploring such agreements.⁴⁴ We should attempt to bring more countries into the program.

Conclusion

The Obama Administration faces a plethora of difficult problems as it takes office. U.S. policy toward Latin America will almost certainly not be a high priority. It is virtually certain that an Alliance for Progress-style comprehensive program will not be possible, given the numerous issues the new administration will face and its inherited constraints.

Where possible, amplifying and expanding efforts across the DIME elements of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) could effectively improve hemispheric prosperity, stability, and security.

There are two factors that the new administration's policymakers should keep in mind as they consider relations with Latin America. First, they should acknowledge the

need for consistent and constructive high-level engagement with the region. We must do all we can to destroy the perception of flighty, sporadic U.S. interest in the region; it will rebuild trust and pay big dividends.

Second, we must understand that Latin Americans do not see the world as we do, so their perceived interests are often profoundly different from our perceived interests. The U.S. must understand this. And our policy makers need to work to find common ground with our southern partners. Attempts to immediately persuade them to accept our point of view seldom work. It is better to find common ground on some issues, and then try to persuade them to see it our way on others.

As Peter Hakim tells us:

Despite their disagreements and dissatisfaction with U.S. policy in the region, most governments in Latin America want to strengthen their relations with Washington. But the Bush Administration has demonstrated neither the determination nor the capability to pursue policies in the Americas that would mobilize the support of the other nations in the Hemisphere.⁴⁵

We now have the capability to build better hemispheric relations inherent in existing programs. We must muster the determination to strengthen relations and exercise the discipline to sustain our efforts.

Endnotes

¹ Peter Hakim, "Is Washington Losing Latin America?" *Foreign Affairs* 85, Issue 1 (January-February 2006): 39.

² Ibid.

³ Abraham Lowenthal, "Como mejorar la cooperación con las Américas" *Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica* 8, No. 4, 2008 at <http://fal.itam.mx/FAE/?p=51> (accessed November 7, 2008).

⁴ James Stavridis, *United States Southern Command Command Strategy 2018* (Miami, FL: June 2008), 6.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, "Population Projections," at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/usinterimproj/> (accessed January 18, 2009).

⁶ Starvridis, 6.

⁷ National Intelligence Council, *Mapping the Global Future: Report of the NIC's 2020 Project* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, December 2004), 34.

⁸ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 2006), 37.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Hakim, 48.

¹¹ Ibid, 49.

¹² Corporación Latinobarómetro, *Informe 2008* (Santiago, Chile: Corporación Latinobarómetro, November 2008), 19.

¹³ Hakim, 42-43.

¹⁴ Ibid., 48.

¹⁵ The term "Washington Consensus" refers to a package of neoliberal economic policies that came into use in the 1990s to tacitly condition developing countries' aid to developing countries. The package consists primarily of free market policies, fiscal responsibility, and constraints on the participation of the state.

¹⁶ Corporación Latinobarómetro, 31.

¹⁷ Ibid., 83.

¹⁸ Gabriel Marcella, *American Grand Strategy for Latin America in the Age of Resentment* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, September 2007), 14.

¹⁹ Ibid., 6-8.

²⁰ Ibid., 22.

²¹ Hakim, 43.

²² Jorge G. Castañeda, "Una nueva agenda para América Latina," September 30, 2008, http://www.nuevamayoria.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=923&Itemid=56 (accessed December 14, 2008).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Hakim, 47-48.

²⁵ Theodore Mesmer, Irwin Baskind, and Enrique Lerdau, "Reflecting on an Alliance" *Américas* 5, No. 50 (September/October 1998), 52-55. This article offers a useful overview of the Alliance for Progress.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁷ Castañeda, Nueva Mayoria article. The author specifically mentions Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, Central American nations, and Peru.

²⁸ Mesmer, Baskind, and Lerdau, 55.

²⁹ Stavridis, 10.

³⁰ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "A New Doctrine of Insecurity? U.S. Military Deployment in South America," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, September/October 2008, Vol. 41, Issue 5, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=1554989591&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1229448160&clientId=20167> (accessed 7 November 2008).

³¹ Washington Office of Latin America, "Below the Radar: U.S. military programs with Latin America, 1997-2007" (Washington, March 2007), 15.

³² Aida F. Akl, "Smooth Sailing in the Western Hemisphere?" VOA.com, 18 August 2008, <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-08/2008-08-22-voa56.cfm?moddate=2008-08-18> (accessed 16 December 2008)

³³ Bush, 37.

³⁴ Marcella, 47.

³⁵ Stavridis, 10. The strategy's sections on this page (Fulfilling the Promise 2018, The Mission Today, and Vision 2018) encapsulate SOUTHCOM's vision and objectives in a way that no other U.S. government strategy for Latin America does.

³⁶ U.S. Department of State, "About the Fulbright Program," (undated) <http://fulbright.state.gov/fulbright/about> (accessed December 16, 2008)

³⁷ SOUTHCOM's web site has a detailed description of the exercise program at <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/exOps.php>.

³⁸ Stavridis, 11-12.

³⁹ Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, "The U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement: An Early Record of Success" (June 4, 2004) http://www.ustr.gov/Document_Library/Fact_Sheets/2004/The_US-Chile_Free_Trade_Agreement_An_Early_Record_of_Success.html (accessed December 17, 2008).

⁴⁰ Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, "Bilateral Trade Agreements (undated), http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Section_Index.html (accessed December 17, 2008).

⁴¹ Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, "Trade Compliance Center" (undated) http://tcc.export.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral_Investment_Treaties/index.asp (accessed December 17, 2008).

⁴² Michael Glenwick, "Is Microcredit the Answer or an Answer for Latin America?" (September 24, 2007) <http://www.coha.org/2007/09/is-microcredit-the-answer-or-an-answer-for-latin-america/> (accessed December 17, 2008).

⁴³ Hakim, 51-52.

⁴⁴ Millennium Challenge Corporation, "Countries" (undated) <http://www.mcc.gov/countries/index.php> (accessed December 17, 2008).

⁴⁵ Hakim, 53.